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ABSTRACT

This study assessed perceptions of 564 undergraduate elementary education majors enrolled in a music education course--Music for the Elementary Classroom--at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux (Louisiana) that involved microteaching using audiovisual equipment. The instructor's observations were also assessed in this 7-year study, which was conducted between the 1983 academic spring semester and the 1989 academic fall semester. The purpose of this study was to formulate a learning environment that is more conducive to teaching undergraduate elementary education majors effective strategies for teaching classroom music. Nearly all (96%) of the student subjects were women, and 80% were seniors. The audiovisual experiences were provided via videotapes. Demonstration classes of elementary school students, each taught by two participating student teachers were videotaped by other participating students. Data were gathered from students via formal written essays and formal discussions based on checklists. Results indicate that the program resulted in considerable improvement in the instructional strategies of undergraduates enrolled in the program. Student teacher improvement included improvement in procedures used, confidence and poise gained, communication skills, pace or tempo in delivery, use of verbal and non-verbal cues, and movement about the classroom while teaching. (TJH)

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"IMPROVEMENT IN INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR
TEACHING MUSIC THROUGH MICRO-TEACHING USING
AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT IN A DEMONSTRATION
CLASSROOM BY UNDERGRADUATES MAJORING IN
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION"

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University

Approximately five hundred eighty-eight students are enrolled each semester in the teacher education programs in the College of Education at Nicholls State University.

Modifications in the College of Education instructional facilities occurred during the 1982 Fall Semester which necessitated new approaches in instruction of undergraduates enrolled in methods classes. The purpose of this study was to determine conditions necessary to bring about a suitable learning environment more conducive to teaching undergraduates majoring in elementary education, effective strategies appropriate for teaching classroom music.

Conclusions were based on perceptions of the undergraduates and observations by the class instructor. Data were grouped by frequency of response, converted to percentages with regard to number of respondents, and reported by rank-order. The study began with the onset of the 1983 Spring Semester, and continued through the 1989 Fall Semester at Nicholls State University.

The seven-year study involved five hundred sixty-four undergraduates micro-teaching in a demonstration classroom setting with camcorder and VCR. Consistently appearing in responses of the undergraduates were significant findings with regard to Improvement of Instructional Techniques and Conditions Affecting Instruction.

Improved conditions in this teaching experience specifically resulted in improvement in instructional strategies of the under-graduates during this seven-year study.

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IMPROVEMENT IN INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING MUSIC
THROUGH MICRO-TEACHING USING AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT
IN A DEMONSTRATION CLASSROOM BY UNDERGRADUATES
MAJORING IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

A Paper

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by

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Nicholls State University is a moderate size state university located sixty miles southwest of New Orleans. Of the approximate six thousand five hundred eleven student undergraduate enrollment, an average five hundred eighty-eight students are currently enrolled in the teacher education programs in the College of Education.

Forty-three percent of the students enrolled in the teacher education programs are majoring in elementary education; of these, twenty-four percent are also working toward an additional endorsement to teach either kindergarten or special education.

Statement of the Problem

At the end of the 1982 Academic Fall Semester, circumstances necessitated a new approach with regard to instructing undergraduates majoring in elementary education in the use of effective methods and materials of instruction for classroom music. Previously, elementary schools in the area had been the focus for the provision of actual classroom settings for periodic utilization by the undergraduates enrolled in "Music for the Elementary Classroom". Several disadvantages existed in this practice:

- (1) Large numbers of students were enrolled in the education methods classes.
- (2) Traveling to and from the off-campus teaching site was time consuming and inconvenient.
- (3) The off-campus classroom setting created an unfamiliar teaching environment.
- (4) Evaluation of the undergraduates teaching had to be conducted in the actual classroom setting. The presence of the evaluator in the classroom often caused distraction and frequently created an atmosphere of anxiety.

Modifications in the College of Education instructional facilities for education majors also occurred during the 1982 Fall semester, which offered a situation more favorable to teaching music methodology. Two well-equipped classrooms were reserved for demonstration teaching by the undergraduates enrolled in education methods classes. These changes served to either alleviate or erase prior disadvantages, and called for a revision of procedures used to instruct the undergraduates in methods of teaching classroom music. In essence, a more suitable learning environment resulted with regard to improving instructional techniques of the undergraduates enrolled in elementary education music methods classes at this institution. The purpose of this study was to determine conditions necessary to bring about a suitable learning environment conducive to teaching undergraduate students majoring in elementary education, effective techniques and strategies appropriate for teaching classroom music.

Method

This study was limited to perceptions of the undergraduates enrolled in the course, "Music for the Elementary Classroom", and to observations by the instructor of the course. To avoid a prompting of responses, data were gathered from the undergraduates through formal written essays concerning their evaluation of the micro-teaching experience, and through formal discussion with the participants using check-lists. The study began with the onset of the 1983 Academic Spring Semester, and continued through the 1989 Academic Fall Semester at Nicholls State University.

An extensive review of related literature preceded the implementation of this study. The term, "micro-teaching", as it would

apply to this study of teaching strategies, was first defined in practical terms as follows:

Micro-teaching: A short, low-content, mildly interesting, well-planned lesson of approximately twenty to thirty minutes in length, involving video-taping and evaluative critique, with emphasis on the improvement of instruction (Kellough and Roberts, 1985).

Variability in teaching by using different methods is an important characteristic of effective teaching (Houston, Clift, Freiberg and Warner, 1988). Teaching strategies used in this study were derived from a review of related literature conducted in a companion study by the researcher, which was published Summer, 1983, in the Louisiana Education Research Journal, and the 1983 Spring Louisiana Association of Teacher Educators Newsletter. A major finding of the researcher's study was that considerable significance was placed on the use of creative, innovative, and variable teaching techniques in the classroom by former graduates of this institution, who majored in elementary education (Gee, 1983).

Specific teaching techniques used by the undergraduates enrolled in "Music for the Elementary Classroom" during the study were grouped according to five basic modes of instruction:

- (1) Motivating, (2) Telling/Explaining, (3) Showing/Demonstrating,
- (4) Questioning/Discussing, and (5) Evaluating/Prescribing.

Plans were made to transport three heterogeneous classes of third or fourth grade students from the local public schools for each regular semester. Elementary students enrolled in campus enrichment classes composed the elementary classes during the summer sessions. A demonstration classroom was made exclusively available for use by undergraduates enrolled in upper level education methods classes. The classroom was equipped with classroom standards and three-level

lighting. An observation room, equipped with eight two-way mirrors, an eight-microphone intercom system, a VCR monitor, and a mounted video camcorder, was reserved adjacent to both the demonstration classroom and an already existing kindergarten classroom of preschoolers from the public schools. Both the demonstration classroom and observation room had direct access to the College of Education Learning Resource Center.

In that approximately thirty students would comprise two separate sections during the semester, fifteen teams were alternately scheduled on either Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or Tuesday and Thursday, on three different weeks. The weeks were also spaced to allow time for follow-up critiques with team members and adequate preparation for the next set of music lessons. Music is a subject that is easily integrated with other areas of the elementary school curriculum (Anderson and Lawrence, 1985). It is for this reason that the music lessons for both sections of students were scheduled consecutively to allow for possible teaching of sequential academic material. An example of the method of scheduling used follows:

EDUCATION 337		DEMONSTRATION TEACHING SCHEDULE	V
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION		ROOMS 134 & 141 POLK HALL	I
NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY		& KINDERGARTEN ROOM	D T
FALL SEMESTER 1989		4th. Grade and/or Kindergarten	E E
			O A
			M
-----		-----	
(TEAM)		(TOPIC)	
#1			
Monday 10/9	Ann Jones		#6
10:50-11:20 a.m.	Sue Smith	<u>Clapping Simple Rhythms</u>	
#2			
Tuesday 10/10	James Johnson		#5
10:55-11:25 a.m.	Jane Breau	<u>Singing "DO" to "SO"</u>	
#3			
(Kindergarten)	Amy Brown		#2
10:20-10:50 a.m.	Maria Duet	<u>Rote Song, "Listen to the Rain"</u>	

#4	Wednesday 10/11	Christy Portier	#1
	10:50-11:20 a.m.	Robin Barker <u>Singing "SO" to "DO" to "SO"</u>	
#5	Thursday 10/12	Rachel Walker	#3
	10:55-11:25 a.m.	Brenda Taylor <u>Rote Song, "Rainbows"</u>	

A majority of the students enrolled in this course had little or no prior teaching experience. For this reason, teaching in teams of two helped to alleviate nervousness of being in front of a class for the first time, and also allowed for alternate teaching using teacher/assistant patterns of instruction. The availability of a classroom reserved for demonstration teaching provided for a convenient setting; one in which the undergraduates could become accustomed to using equipment and materials of instruction. Video tapes modeling effective techniques of musical instruction were viewed by the undergraduates prior to teaching in the demonstration classroom. Music lessons taught by the education majors were audio-video taped from the observation room by other students in the class for later critique and evaluation without causing anxiety or disruption. Each member of the class was given a copy of the music lesson being taught by the team in the demonstration room.

Results of the Study

The seven-year study involved 564 undergraduates micro-teaching in the demonstration classroom setting with VCR. Ninety-six percent of the participants were female; four percent, male. Eighty percent of the undergraduates were of senior classification during the semester in which they were enrolled in "Music for the Elementary Classroom". Ten percent were juniors, and ten percent were graduate students certifying to teach elementary education. No significant

difference in responses of the three groups was found. The study included fourteen regular academic semesters and five summer sessions.

The researcher found during this seven-year period that the instructor of this elementary music methods class for undergraduates had to perform pedagogical duties in four different roles:

Teacher - During the period in which the undergraduates learned subject matter, previewed video tapes illustrating effective teaching techniques, were learning to select and use appropriate media, and practiced correctly operating the audio-video equipment.

Guide and Resource Person - While the undergraduates in teams perused available methods and materials of instruction and planned appropriate music lessons in the Learning Resource Center.

Facilitator - During the time in which the undergraduates actually taught the music lessons in the demonstration classrooms and were videotaped by classmates from the observation room for later review and critique with the instructor.

Discussant and Evaluator - While reviewing video tapes of the music lesson taught with each undergraduate teaching team.

Data collected from the essays and formal discussions with the undergraduates using check-lists during this study were grouped according to two categories; (1) **Improvement in Instructional Techniques** and (2) **Conditions Affecting Instruction**.

IMPROVEMENT IN INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES		
(Rank-Order)	564 <u>RESPONDENTS</u>	(Frequency of Response)
1. Improvement in Procedures Used	479	(85%)
2. Confidence and Poise Gained	417	(74%)
3. Enhanced Communication Skills Eye Contact Voice Control Speech Patterns (Habits)	366	(65%)
4. Improved Pace or Tempo in Delivery	310	(55%)
5. Use of Verbal and Non-verbal Cues	214	(38%)
6. Movement About the Classroom While Teaching	62	(11%)

Data were grouped according to frequency of response, converted to percentages with regard to number of respondents, and placed in rank-order. Consistently appearing in the responses of the undergraduates with regard to **Improvement of Instructional Techniques** were improvement in procedures used, confidence and poise gained, enhanced communication skills (eye contact, voice control, speech patterns/habits), improved pace or tempo in delivery, use of verbal and non-verbal cues, and movement about the classroom while teaching the lesson.

CONDITIONS AFFECTING INSTRUCTION			
(Rank-Order)	<u>564 Respondents</u>	(Frequency of Response)	
1. Perusal and Collection of Materials	455	(81%)	
2. Team-planning and Teaching Experience	417	(74%)	
3. Classroom Organization and Management	315	(56%)	
4. Use of Media	293	(52%)	
5. Critique of Lessons	242	(43%)	
6. Teaching in Familiar Environment	67	(12%)	

With regard to **Conditions Affecting Instruction**, the undergraduates consistently reported as beneficial the opportunities to peruse and collect available materials, team-planning and teaching experience, skills gained in classroom organization and management, learning to use media (soft and hardware), being able to videotape and critically view teaching their music lessons in a non-threatening manner conducive to learning, and being able to plan and teach in a familiar comfortable environment.

Conclusions

Based on perceptions of the participants in this study and observations by the instructor of the course, improved conditions in this teaching experience resulted in considerable improvement in instructional strategies of the undergraduates enrolled in "Music for the Elementary Classroom" during this seven-year period.

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